



Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!

Psalm 34:3

On Worship Leading

with Pastor Steve

Mentoring: An Eternal Investment

One of the most important and God-given tasks of a worship leader is to train others to lead worship. I believe scripture gives us a mandate for training others for ministry. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* (Ephesians 4:11-12)

At the risk of taking liberty with the scriptures I believe you could add worship leaders to the list. In many churches worship leaders are known as worship pastors. The title worship pastor carries with it more responsibility than that of a song leader. Almost anyone who can sing can lead songs, but a pastor has the responsibility of caring for the church body. This includes nurturing the body and training for ministry.

Too often, however, egos get in the way (especially with musicians) and leaders become threatened by others who have the same anointing as they do or are more musically talented. Fear of losing their position elevates pride and disposes humility. It was the fear of losing their position that caused many of the church leaders in Jesus' day to miss the time of God's visitation. Many were led astray by these leaders. This fear is harmful not only to the worship leader but to the entire body of Christ who stands to be blessed by another's ministry. It is essential for worship pastors/leaders to recognize the anointing and abilities of others and make a place for them to be trained and nurtured. Only those who love the body should be given the title and responsibility of worship pastor.

There are probably many different training programs available, but I think the most effective model is the way Jesus interacted with his disciples. In Mark 3:14 we read that Jesus appointed twelve that *they might be with him and He might send them out to preach.* Jesus first and foremost wanted these twelve guys to hang out with him. He valued relationship. More than wanting to teach his disciples to follow a list of rules, Jesus wanted to draw them to himself.

To be effective in training someone for ministry a leader has to hang out with his disciple. It is critical to build a relationship where trust is established. It is equally important to build a friendship that goes beyond the ministry training. This will keep the relationship from being mechanical and keep the leader from making the disciple his project.

When people become projects the expectation level rises. There is little room for them to make mistakes. But a trusting relationship extends ample grace and gives plenty of room for failure. If people know they have this room they are much more likely to take risks. It is in taking risks that they learn the ropes and become more effective leaders. This type of relationship gives the leader a platform for critique and correction. It also gives the disciple freedom to respond in a positive way.

A few years ago I had the privilege of mentoring a young man (at least he was then) who is now the worship leader at his church. Gary and I met at a college and career bible study where I led worship a couple of times. When we met we had no idea what would ensue. Gary and his wife to be soon began attending our church. After learning that he played the bass guitar I invited him to play with our praise band. It became obvious that Gary's vocal and musical abilities far exceeded mine and that God had anointed him to minister musically. However, before the mentoring process progressed too far Gary and I began a friendship that still exists today.

Our friendship made the entire mentoring process a real pleasure. We laughed together, cried together, worked together, played together, worshiped together, ate together, ministered together and prayed together. All the while I was modeling how to lead worship and be a worship leader/pastor. Gary

would go visiting with me and we also attended worship and other church conferences together. Much of the mentoring was deliberate, but some of it occurred during the process of our friendship.

I believe Jesus mentored his disciples much in the same way. They spent a lot of time together and experienced a broad range of emotions together. Jesus' disciples observed his life and witnessed his humanity. He obviously called the twelve to prepare them to carry on the ministry once he returned to the Father. Though there were times when the training sessions were obvious, I feel confident that parts of it took place in the course of everyday relationship.

If you are a worship leader God has called you to train and release others who have the same calling as you. The first step is to recognize who God is calling and then began establishing a relationship that fosters the mentoring process. There are few greater joys than seeing someone minister in whom you have invested time, money and relationship. The apostle John tapped into this joy. He wrote, *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.* (3 John 4)

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